Atheists. For, though they did: admit of certain beings, to which they attributed the name of gods, yet, according to the true notion of God, they really acknowledged none at all (i. e. no iinder-standing nature as the original of things), but Night and Chaos, senseless and stupid matter, fortuitously moved, was to them the highest of all Numens. So that this theology of their's was a thing wholly founded in atheistical nonsense.

xiv. And now we think it seasonable here **to** observe, how vast a difference there was .betwixt these old Materialists in Aristotle, and those other philosophers, mentioned before in the first

chapter, who determined,

ovSev ov'Se *yiyveaOai ov§e tpQtipwOai TWV OVTCOV'* That no real entity at all was generated or corrupted,—for this reason, because nothing could be made out of nothing. These were chiefly the philosophers of the Italic or **Py-**thagoric succession; and their design in jt was not, as Aristotle was pleased somewhere to affirm, aveXav 7ra<ravrj)v y€V£crtv,'to contradict common sense and experience, in denying all natural generations and alterations; but only to interpret nature rightly in them, and that in way of opposition to those Atheistic Materialists, after this manner: that in all the mutations of nature, generations, and alterations, there was neither any new sub stance made, which was not before, nor any entity

really distinct from the pre-existing substances,
but only that substance which was before, diverse
ly modified; and so nothing produced in genera
tions, but new modifications, mixtures, and sepa-
rqlions of pre-existent substances.

•

Now this doctrine of their's drove at these two things: first, the taking away of such qualities